

the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers. Turning to the south you look down on the busy city, whose tumultuous din rings steadily in your ear—the Mission Dolores, in a charming little valley beyond, backed by graceful hills—the southern arm of the bay lost in the horizon, and the dim and distant coast range of mountains running parallel on the east. Facing the west you look upon the narrow strait through which the restless ocean ebbs and flows, and into which the sea breeze sweeps daily with its chilling but purifying mists—the Golden Gate—the Presidio—the Fort—the great ocean beyond.

Islands within our Limits.

The following islands are also within the legislative limits of this city and county, viz., Yerba Buena Island, Alcatraz Island, Angel Island and the Farallon Islands :

Yerba Buena Island—is situated in the bay of San Francisco, north-east from the city. From Rincon Point and Market Street Wharf it is distant about one mile and a half, and from Contra Costa nearly three miles. The northern end of the island is distant from the Golden Gate (Fort Point) five miles and a half. This island contains 198 acres, of which 75 consist of rich soil, well adapted for garden purposes; 15 acres are heavily timbered; 23 acres jungle and brushwood; 75 acres hilly, rocky and sandy, being thickly covered with the herb, or mint plant, from which the island takes its present name.* Springs of excellent water abound on the eastern and western sides, in the midst of a fertile valley. The apex of this island is 339 feet above high water. In early times it was densely covered with wood, and was known to ancient mariners and whalers as Wood Island; but in 1839, one N. Spear, placed a number of goats thereon, and hence the still popular name of Goat Island. On the easterly side is a wide, shoal bay, dry at low water, which, with the present material on the island, could be filled up, so as to be more than double its size. This island is formed of compact beds of sandstone, from a few inches to six and eight feet in thickness. Its texture varies but little in the different beds, and the grain is close and even, and generally very fine. The position of these beds of sandstone is highly favorable for working, readily loaded at the wharf and ferried over the channel to the city. Several quarries are now opened on the island, and the supply of building stone appears inexhaustible. The U. S. Government having proposed to place some batteries upon the island, included it in the third line of fortifications, and it was reserved with the other points in 1852. It is claimed, however, under a Mexican grant, dated 8th November, 1838, and is said to be the first island granted by Governor Alvarado under the decree “authorizing the granting of islands to Mexican citizens.” This claim was recently rejected by the U. S. District Court in this city.

Alcatraz (Pelican) or Bird Island—is also within the bay, lying to the westward of Yerba Buena, from which it is distant about a mile and a half. From the Golden Gate it is under four miles. This island is midway between Yerba Buena and Angel islands. It takes its name from the immense number of these aquatic birds (pelicans) which, in early days, sought it as an abiding place. The apex of this rocky eminence is 154 feet above the level of the water, and its area is 35 acres. Its greatest length and its extreme breadth are 1,673 feet and 590 feet, respectively. A portion is covered with a luxuriant growth of wild oats. This

* This herb grows through the underwood in form of a vine, some feet in length. The leaves are six inches apart; it is very fragrant and was considered medicinal, and sometimes used as a substitute for tea.